

The Liberty Bell as a Symbol for Civil Rights

Grade Levels: K-5

(Expected Class Sessions to Complete: 1-2)

Objectives:

- The students will understand the basic principles of civil rights
- Students will understand how the inscription on the Liberty Bell supports civil rights
- Students will understand the meaning of the liberty bell especially its symbolism relating to the Civil Rights movement.

Standards Correlation:

Writing W 5.2, Speaking & Listening SL 5.1, SL 5.2,

Materials:

- Picture of the Liberty Bell with the inscription
- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles
- Container of water and cups, or student's own water bottles
- Picture of Rosa Parks with the Liberty Bell
- Chart paper and marker
- Paper to write the class made inscription
- Paper outline of the Liberty Bell, large enough to hang the new class made inscription
- Sticky notes (optional)
- Thesaurus

Introduction (Before the Lesson):

1. The teacher writes the Essential Questions on chart paper or the board and tells the students that the goal of this lesson is for all of them to know the answers to these questions. Review the questions and refer back to them often for an informal assessment of students' understanding.
2. The teacher will need to choose 2 different physical descriptions to divide students into 2 groups., (i.e. blue eyes, blonde hair, etc)
3. Prepare a large paper outline of the Liberty Bell
4. Prepare/gather a large sheet of paper to write the class made new inscription for the paper Liberty Bell
5. The teacher introduces the topic by reading a book about the Liberty Bell or showing a picture of the Liberty Bell.

Engage/Procedure:

Whole Class Discussion:

1. The teacher tells the class, preferably after recess or gym class, that all students may take a drink except for the students that have tennis shoes, (or choose another description that works with your group of students).
2. After the select group of students get drinks, form a class discussion on:
 - Was it fair for only those students to get drinks? Why or why not?
 - How did it feel as a member of the group that was not able to get a drink?
 - How did it feel as a member of the group that was entitled to a drink to know that other people were denied a drink because of the shoes on their feet?
3. The teacher asks the group: "Did you know that there was a time when all people did not have the same civil rights? Some groups of people were treated differently just because of the color of their skin. Since each of you is a member of our society you have civil rights. One of those rights is to be able to attend the school in your neighborhood, and that all schools should be equal. You cannot be excluded because of the color of your skin."

Cooperative Work:

1. The teacher arranges the students into groups of 3.
2. The teacher tells the groups that starting tomorrow only students that have blonde hair may have recess during recess time.
3. The other students will have work assignments to complete during this time.
4. The teacher allows time for the students in each group to discuss this new rule and how they feel about it.
5. The groups should also discuss if the teacher is interfering with their civil rights.
6. The groups are given time to share their ideas with the entire class.

Teacher Directed Activity:

1. The teacher prepares the class to hear a reading of The Story of Ruby Bridges. "Let's read a true story of a young girl named Ruby. She lived during a time when blacks and whites went to different schools. The schools were not equal; blacks and whites were not getting the same education. The law was changed so that blacks could get the same education as whites and now attend formerly predominantly white schools. Ruby was one of the black students that were chosen to go to an all white school."
2. After a reading of the book, have the class discuss their thoughts on the book.
3. The teacher can scribe their ideas on chart paper.
4. The teacher states to the class "that one of your civil rights is to attend the school you are in right now. As you just heard in the Ruby Bridges story blacks had to endure some harsh times to have change occur, so they could have the same civil rights as whites. Black citizens also didn't always have the right to vote, or to sit wherever they liked on buses. (Show the picture of Rosa Parks to the class.) There was a time when there were separate water fountains for blacks and white as well. Since blacks and whites are both citizens of the United States we now know that we should have the same civil rights.
5. One of our national symbols, the Liberty Bell, (show the picture), has inscribed on it: Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."
6. Discuss as a class the meaning of the vocabulary words in the inscription of the Bell, particularly the words, *proclaim, liberty, inhabitants, thereof* and *unto* and the phrases *throughout all the land*, and *unto all the inhabitants thereof*.
7. Depending on the ability of the students in your class, this can be a guided discussion by the teacher, cooperative work, or independent work.
8. The goal is to provide synonyms for the words in the inscription. Incorporate the use a thesaurus.
9. The class should discuss why the Liberty Bell may have been chosen as a symbol to represent civil rights groups. This can be done as a whole class or small groups. If done in small groups give each group sticky notes and they could place ideas on a large sheet of paper entitled *Why Was the Liberty Bell Chosen as a symbol for Civil Rights Groups?* Gather together to share the ideas.

Closing:

Cooperative Work:

1. The students are to rewrite the inscription of the Liberty Bell being mindful of what they think it should include, and if the language should be more modern. This activity is attached as a worksheet, also.
2. Each student will receive a worksheet and work individually on this worksheet. (Handout #1) Depending on the skills of your group, you might choose to have small groups work together, or have the students draw their ideas for a new inscription.
3. Have the chart paper with the vocabulary words visible for those students that may need to use them as a resource.
4. The students will then meet together to share and create a new class inscription. This will be written on large paper and displayed in the classroom on top of the paper Liberty Bell.

Post Visit-Extension (Assessment):

- Depending on the ability of your students, the children must respond to the 3 parts of the rubric either

verbally or in writing. A primary teacher may want to do individual interviews. Older grades may expect the children to answer these questions in written form. The rubric is attached (Handout #2)

Vocabulary:

- Liberty : freedom to do many things without getting into trouble
- Civil Rights : rights to personal liberty established by the 13th and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution and certain Congressional acts, esp. as applied to an individual or a minority group.
- Proclaim: to announce or declare in an official or formal manner
- Inhabitants: someone who lives in a place
- Thereof: of that or it
- unto : to
- throughout all the land : included everywhere
- unto all the inhabitants thereof : to the people who live there

Handout#1 Liberty Bell Inscription

Name: _____

On the Liberty Bell the inscription reads **“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof.”**

Write a new inscription that would support civil rights for all people in our country.

Questions to consider:

1. What should the inscription include?
2. Should the language be changed to more modern terms?

Handout #2 Civil Rights Rubric

Name: _____ Date: _____

Category	Mastery 3	Knows Most of the Information 2	Needs to Know More on this Topic 1
What is a symbol?			
What does the Liberty Bell represent to Civil Rights groups?			
Is the Bell a successful symbol for this group? Explain.			